



Jonah Bible study guide

A clear 4-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read Jonah as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 4 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/jonah

Jonah at a glance

BIG IDEA

The book of Jonah is well known for the amazing events it recounts, but the book's main purpose is to teach us about God. [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Unknown. Date: Around 755 BC. Setting: A time when Assyria's influence in Israel had temporarily decreased, likely during the reign of Jeroboam II. [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this book in its historical setting and as prophetic proclamation. Track audience, covenant background, indictment, hope, and how later Scripture receives its promises.

MAJOR THEMES

- To recount a story of the far-reaching scope of God's sovereignty and salvation
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Locate judgment and hope in the prophet's historical setting before making modern parallels.
- Treat prophetic imagery as Scripture's language, not a shortcut around careful context.

Jonah 1

17 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jonah · Joppa · Nineveh · Tarshish · Sea · Blood

Questions

- Try to state the argument in one sentence before anyone reacts to it.
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Why does the writer bring Jonah into this argument, and what claim does the example support?
- The word sea is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What problem was this letter written to solve, and does knowing that change how the instruction lands?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

SESSION 2 OF 4

Jonah 2

10 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jonah · Sheol · Prayer · Salvation

Questions

- What is the writer trying to get these readers to do or stop doing?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- What does the writer assume the readers know about Jonah, and how is that knowledge being used?
- Define prayer from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- Is this a command, a description, or an argument? They are not read the same way.
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Jonah 3

10 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Nineveh · Jonah · Sackcloth · Beast · Ashes · Call

Questions

- What has the writer already established that this section is building on?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- Which detail about Jonah matters to the argument here, and which familiar details do not?
- Where else have you heard sackcloth used, and is it being used that way here?
- What did the first readers face that we do not, and what does that change?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Jonah 4

11 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jonah · LORD · Nineveh · Tarshish · Sun · Wind

Questions

- Where does the writer expect pushback, and how do you know?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- Trace the sentence or paragraph that mentions Jonah. What conclusion does the writer want the readers to reach?
- The word sun is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- Where does the writer move from what God has done to what we should do?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand Jonah in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

Tyndale House Publishers. Book background, purpose, setting, and structural orientation. CC BY-SA 4.0.

<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

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Background and context for Jonah [__protos-app.com/commentary/jonah](https://protos-app.com/commentary/jonah)

A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [__protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [__protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

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